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**James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, June 16,
1813, from Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe
Correspondence, Transcribed and Edited by Gerard W.
Gawalt, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress**

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James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson

Washington June 16th. 1813

Dear Sir

At the commencement of the war I was decidedly of your opinion, that the best disposition which could be made of our little navy, would be to keep it in a body in a safe port, from which it might sally only on some important occasion, to render essential service. Its safety, in itself, appeared to be an important object, as while safe, it formed a check on the enemy in all its operations along our coast, and increased proportionally its expence, in the force to be kept up. as well to annoy our commerce, as to protect its own. The reasoning against it, in which all our naval officers have agreed, is that if stationd together, in a port, New York for example, the British would immediately block it up there, by a force rather superior, & then harrass our coast & commerce without restraint, & with any force however small, in that case, a single frigate might, by cruising along the coast and plundering & menacing occasionally, at different points, keep great bodies of our militia in motion: that while our frigates are at sea, the expectation that they may be together, will compell the British to keep in a body, wherever they institute a blockade or cruize a force, equal at least to our whole force: that being the

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best sailors, they hasarded littled by cruizing separately or together occasionally, as they might bring on an action or avoid one, whenever they thought fit: that in that manner they would annoy the enemy's commerce wherever they went, excite alarm in the W Indies 7 elsewhere, and even give protection to our own trade, by drawing at times the enemy's squadron off from our own coast: that by cruizing, our commanders would become mor skilful, have an opportunity to acquire glory, and if successful keep alive the public spirit. The reasoning in favor of each plan is so nearly equal, that it is hard to say, which is best. I have no doubt of some future day, that a fortification will be erected on the bank in the middle of the bay, and be connected in the manner you propose with a naval force in Lynhaven bay, for the protection of Norfolk, and all the country dependant on the Chessapeake, In time of war it will be difficult to accomplish so extensive an object.

The nomination of ministers for Russia is still before the Senate, Mr. Giles & Genl. Smith uniting with Mr. King, & others, against Mr. Gallatin have so far succeeded in preventing its confirmation. They appointed a committee, the object of which was, to communicate with the President, on the subject, & give him to understand that

if he would supply his place in the Treasury, they would confirm the nomination to Russia. The President had before answer'd a call of the Senate, that the appointment to Russia did not vacate the commissn. In the dept. of the Treasury, that the secretary of the Navy did the business in Mr. G's absence. To the chairman, who asked & obtaind a personal interview, he communicated his objections, to a conference with the committee, on the ground, that the resolution under which they were appointed, did not authorise it, even could any advantage result from it, which however was improbable, as neither party would be apt to change its opinion, and on the principle of compromise that nothing could be done, or ought to be done. Various resolutions tending to embarrass the nomination, divide the republican party in the Senate, & perpetuate that division by irritating its members towards each other, have been introduced & are still depending. Among them is one, intended to express the sense of the house, against the compatability of the two

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offices. The delay has done harm & doubtless was intended to have that effect. The result is yet uncertain.

With great respect & esteem your friend & servant Jas. Monroe

The President is indisposed with a bilious attack, apparently slight.

RC (Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress).